

THE 'MATTHEAN' CHURCH

On p. 229 of vol. xvi I suggested that the Matthean church was 'the body of these little ones who are ready to follow Jesus', a group with an ascetic and charismatic character, that found its continuation in the Church of Syria, finally merging into the monastic movement of the Catholic Church. This is now confirmed by the Apocalypse of Peter, found in Naghamadi, of which I got the unpublished German translation by the courtesy of A. Werner and the Berliner Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften. It represents a group of 'these little ones who are seen (by God)' and fights against those 'who let themselves be called bishop, and also deacons, as if they had received authority from God, who recline at table after the law of the places of honour' (p. 79, 19-30, cf. Matt. xxiii. 6-10; xviii. 10). The polemics on p. 71, 14 and 75, 15 ff. point to those who 'love wealth' and 'serve concupiscence' by 'loving material creatures'. As the whole treatise clearly depends on Matthean traditions, it offers the first direct evidence of an ascetic Judeo-Christian group of 'these little ones' with no bishops or deacons, still experiencing heavenly visions and prophetic auditions.

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